

she said smilingly, and went over to the hot water and dishes.

She rarely joined in the conversation, but listened to the increasing communicativeness of the stranger as the bottle passed.

"It has been a long time coming," said the man. "Search and hunt and dig and blast! Sometimes nigh mad with heartbreak, often face to face with starvation and death! Many's the time I have come out of the hellish woods, with their tangles and mazes, calling, and smiling, and promising, swearing that I'd never go into them again." He banged his fist upon the table and the glasses rattled. "But it was no use. With the birds and the winds and the flowers of spring the call always came, and I had to go. You forget the disappointment and sorrow of yesterday in the promise of tomorrow. It's a big, gripping gamble on the chance blow of the pick; it gets into the blood, the heart, the head, and the only thing to still it is death."

"Better a sure thing with comfort in reason," said Adam sententiously. "I don't hold with this chancy business."

Eve cast a contemptuous glance at her husband. Macfarlane laughed boisterously.

"But the winning moment's worth it all, when you burst in on the hid vein, and you see before you the prize for which men stake their lives and women sell their souls,—the power that lifts you out of the mud, a thing of naught, and sets you among kings and princes. Maybe the next time I come this way I'll be a millionaire, riding in my own automobile, with men servants to wait on me."

"Many a man has dreamed palaces and died in the poorhouse," Eve's eyes danced, and her words had mocking provocation in them.

"That's so, Ma'am; but it is no dream now. I know it." Thrusting his hand into his breast pocket, he pulled out a survey map. "I've followed it like a bloodhound, traced, tested, dug down, blasted, till I can point out the run on this map, just as if it lay here under my finger. I struck it here, and here again, and this is the way it runs where I've marked it on the lots. But there! I am talking too much," and roused prudence checked the half-drunken spirit of boastfulness. With trembling fingers he folded the marked sheet and thrust it into his pocket. "No offense, I hope," he mumbled apologetically. "All good friends; but you can't be too careful. Nothing's sure till you've got it in your hands fast and tight. That's so, isn't it?"

"Sure," agreed Adam, amiably muddled by this time.

"I'm on my way to see the lawyers and the land office folks and get it all fixed up. When I come back we'll talk; till then say nothing. That's all right, isn't it?"

"Sure it's right," and Adam nodded his big head with vast wisdom.

Eve bent over her work; for the light was not good. Gradually the drowsy conversation ceased. The monotonous, droning drip of the rain on the metal roof had a somnolent lullaby in it. The stertorous breathing of the half-drunken men developed into full-bodied snores. Adam's head rested, open-mouthed, against the tall

**This modern Eve tried to make herself an Eden by stealing a gold mine. Did she do enough to earn her forgiveness?**

back of his chair. He looked the clay he was, heavy, sodden, unilluminated. Macfarlane leaned sideways against the table, saturated with sleep, drowsed with drink. The plan hung half out of his pocket.

With quick, noiseless movement Eve rose, went toward him, and drew the paper deftly out. Swiftly and silently she unfolded it, noted its title and date, then carefully jotted down the numbers of the marked lots. In a few moments it was back in the pocket of the sleeping man, the woman busy again by the window with her needle.

An hour later the miner moved uneasily. Instinctively he felt for his treasured map, found it with a sigh of relief, and sat up.

THE stranger went to bed early; for he had a long, tiring journey before him on the morrow. The rain had ceased, the moon was rising, when Adam went to the barn to see that all was right for the night. Eve came across the yard, dressed as if for a journey. He gazed at her open-mouthed for a moment.

"Where be you going, Eve, at this time of night?" he asked.

"To St. Ambrose," she replied shortly. "I'm uneasy about Sarah."

Sarah was Adam's sister, and had been sick for some time.

"But you can't go tonight, Woman," he remonstrated. "Twenty miles of a lone road! Let be till morning, Eve."

"I must go tonight; so harness the mare and let me get away. Don't talk or argue; for I'm going. You can make breakfast for the man and yourself in the morning." She spoke in tones with which he was familiar. "Will you harness the mare, or must I do it?" and she moved angrily toward the stable.

"If you say you are going, there's no stopping you. But let be till tomorrow, Eve, my dear. Do now."

"Tomorrow! Tomorrow!" she answered in a low, bitter voice. "It's always tomorrow with you and your like! It's now, tonight, with me! That is one of the big differences between us. Harness the mare, and be quick about it! I'll be back day after tomorrow," she said as he handed her the reins. "And you needn't wake the stranger. I have locked the liquor up; so go to bed."

It was nearly six o'clock the next morning when Eve and the tired mare ended the long night's journey in the little country town forty miles from her home. She laughed when she thought of Adam's sister twenty miles behind.

When the land office opened she was at the door, a little satchel in her hand containing the life savings of herself and Adam. Before noon, with the polite assistance of one of the clerks, she had carefully examined a print of the Havilah survey, such as

Macfarlane possessed, and had purchased the lots and rights that were numbered on a slip of paper she carried. Less than fifty dollars remained of the hard-earned savings. Eve did not grudge the outlay.

WHEN the stranger returned a week later Adam hid in the barn. The audacity of his wife's deed appalled him; while its brilliant success overshadowed its wickedness. Eve, however, proved herself amply capable of facing and outfacing the angry, bitter-tongued man. The fury of his attack spent itself vainly upon the coldly brilliant fencer opposed to him. Her darting, rapier-like tongue stung and stabbed him into helplessness. Her invulnerable audacity and unabashed candor silenced alike protestation and appeal. He had been accounted too, and with abundant reason, a man of spirit, dangerous to cross; but hitherto he had fought only with men and beasts.

"If I had a woman like you, I'd own the world!" he exclaimed when he realized the impossibility of regaining what he had lost from her steely grasp.

"You would own, like him, just what I gave you," she retorted scornfully, pointing to Adam. "Like him you are a morrow man. I know nothing of tomorrow, and day and night are one to me."

When Adam left the farm and moved to Havilah, Macfarlane went with them, the servant of those who had robbed him. Why he went he could not explain to himself, except that the woman exerted upon him a compelling, irresistible fascination: not because she was a woman; for to him Eve was passionless as gold, with the same alluring power,—a splendidly fashioned woman of ice, clear and hard as a diamond.

He spent his wages in drink. Sometimes, as the dormant man within him whipped and spurred, he swore that he would break the strengthening bonds; but the impulse soon passed, the power of sustained grip was missing. With it had gone the bulldog, venturesome spirit of other days.

There were those who lamented the changed appearance of Havilah. Gone were the multicolored glories of the forest. Rows of gaunt derricks replaced the pines. Eve saw in the cavernous quarries rent sepulchers from which a richer and fuller existence had emerged. She heard music, as of the morning stars at Creation, in the rhythmic beat of the engines, the roar and clatter of the crushers, the shriek of the steam whistle. She looked forth upon her creation, and, lo! it was very good.

THEN came little Abel. A few minutes after he was born Eve asked to see him, and for once fear stood in her eyes. Her keen glance searched the little, red, puckered face eagerly, fearfully. Then fear vanished.

"Lay him at my side," she commanded, satisfied.

When she opened her eyes again the doctor and nurse marveled at the change. The cold, dominating beauty was transfigured with the tenderness and glory of motherhood. The child grew and flourished, a sturdy-limbed, merry-faced little chap, quick-blooded, vital, generous,—a tiny, masculine Eve, masterful, wilful; yet with a wealth of affection, magically winsome.

Night and day Eve watched the child, tasting the bitter-sweet joys of motherhood, knowing the bliss of possession and the deadly fear of loss. She selected his playmates with rigorous discrimination, knowing not that the only democracy on earth is in the Republic of Childhood. With the whimsical wisdom of children, the friend to whom little Abel was most devoutly attached was the social Ishmaelite, Jim Macfarlane.

The Morrow Man was pit boss for Adam, his knowledge of local mining being unrivaled. Moreover he had a masterful, yet good-natured way of handling the childishly passionate Italian and stubborn Polish laborers in the pits that made him worshipped by them.

More than once his presence, half drunken, had magically stopped faction fights when knives and guns were out and official guardians of the peace had sought cover. To his men—human wild creatures—and to little children he was a king, a god, whose mighty weaknesses made him more approachably worshipful.

When Eve first noticed the strange friendship her heart almost stopped beating with fear that the slumbering vengeance of the man should purpose desperately to visit the sins of the parents upon the child. In her creed there had been no place for the forgiveness of sins.

She watched the two at play, the man harnessed and capering ludicrously to the child's vast delight, or digging pits, pretending to mine wondrous treasure; the same man

"When Eve had read its contents she thrilled with joy."

M. LEON  
BRACKF

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